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RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PODGORICA 000278

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

FOR EUR/SCE AND EUR/RPM

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SUBJECT: MONTENEGRO'S FOREIGN MINISTER SEEKS NATO MEMBER SUPPORT FOR MAP APPLICATION

REF: PODGORICA 274

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¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The FM presented copies of the GoM's request for MAP consideration at the NATO summit in April to member missions in Podgorica. He urged member governments to consider Montenegro's strong commitment to joining the Euro-Atlantic community and examine the progress it has made in a short time.

He also asked that Montenegro's request be considered on its own merits. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) On 7 November, FM Rocen convened NATO member country ambassadors in Podgorica to discuss the Montenegro's application for MAP, which PM Djukanovic presented to NATO SYG Scheffer on 5 November (Reftel). The FM handed each participant in the meeting a copy of the PM's letter to Scheffer, under cover of a letter from him to each country's Minister of Foreign Affairs. (Post is transmitting to EUR/SCE a scanned copy of Rocen's letter to the Secretary, along with the attached copy of Djukanovic's letter. Original will follow by pouch.) Rocen added that the PM had sent similar letters to Sarkozy and Merkel announcing GoM's desire to be considered for MAP at the April summit.

¶3. (SBU) FM Rocen told the group that he had been present for the meeting with Scheffer and that the SYG's response had been very encouraging. The SYG, according to Rocen, said that NATO is counting on new members, not suffering from "enlargement fatigue." Rocen also praised President Bush's recent speech supporting entry into NATO by Croatia and Albania, in which the President had specifically mentioned Montenegro among the aspiring candidates.

¶4. (SBU) The GoM, Rocen went on to say, fully understands the obligations inherent in preparing for MAP and is committed to them in the interest of its strategic imperative of joining the Euro-Atlantic community. He also asked that each individual candidate be considered on its own merits, recalling NATO's "regatta" approach to considering applications. While recounting Montenegro's progress, he acknowledged the difficulty of fulfilling all the conditions related to the Intensified Dialogue in the coming months. He commented that the GoM is adopting a work plan to rectify the "negative" aspects of the European Commission progress report for Montenegro released earlier this week.

¶4. (SBU) The FM described in detail the progress Montenegro has made to position itself for MAP, elaborating on what was presented in the letter:

-- It will finalize its membership in the Adriatic Charter at a meeting of the five FMs on the margins of the OSCE ministerial next month.

-- It is ready to participate actively and contribute to regional cooperation to the best of its ability.

-- It is ready to host a NATO liaison office in Podgorica.

-- It is carrying out an aggressive communications strategy to communicate the benefits of NATO membership to the Montenegrin public.

-- A secure communication and records facility is ready and awaiting inspection by NATO experts next week.

-- A medical team is training to deploy for international peacekeeping operations and will be fully prepared by the end of the year.

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-- Additional training is in progress for armed PKO units, which should be ready by next year.

-- The GoM has adopted a National Security and Defense Strategy, which will soon be submitted to the Parliament for approval.

-- The GoM plans to report its progress on IPAP goals by the end of the year.

-- It is continuing the Intensified Dialogue and other regular contacts with NATO.

KONTOS